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November 18, 2004

V CORPS UNITS LEND A HELPING BAND TO TIKRIT SCHOOLS

Task Force Vanguard release

TIKRIT, Iraq — Task Force Vanguard from the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division teamed up with the division rock band at the Al-Alam Primary School here recently to play an “unplugged” concert to entertain a group of more than 100 Iraqi students. Several local leaders, including the Al-Alam mayor, attended the performance.



COURTESY 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

An ensemble from the First Infantry Division Band entertains Iraqi children at the Al-Alam Primary School in Tikrit, Iraq.

The plan was the idea of the band's first sergeant. Strapped for cash, local schools can offer little in the way of traditional extracurricular activities. Music programs are virtually non-existent.

Following the performance, band members and representatives from the task force, the 201st Iraqi National Guard and the Tikrit police handed out school supplies to the students. The giveaway was part of a series of school supply handouts planned during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan that should result in more than

2,000 students receiving book bags, notebooks, pens, pencils and crayons from task force soldiers.

The program was extremely well received by the students and local leaders.

"The kids loved it," said the task force's civil affairs team chief, Staff Sgt. John Imperato.

"They were on their feet dancing and clapping the whole time. There were smiles everywhere," Imperato added. Division band and task force officials say they are planning for future ensemble performances, to both entertain and educate local youth.

